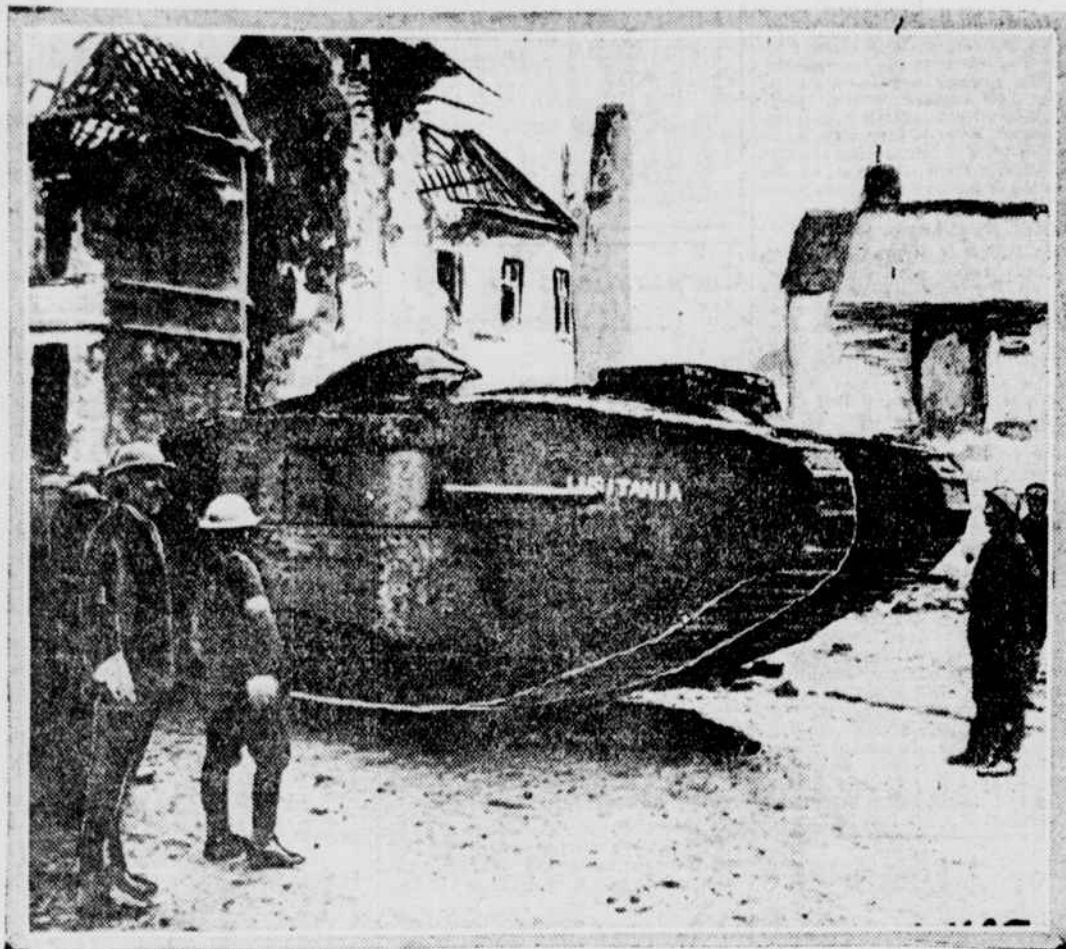


## The Great War—1240th Day

## THE "AVENGER" GOING INTO ACTION



Fighting machine, named after sunken liner and called "Avenger," was photographed as it was making its way through a ruined French village to attack Germans in the offensive at Cambrai.

## Italians Regain Ground; Halt Offensive

Diaz Troops, Despite Terrific Fire, Retake Lost Asolone Positions

Berlin Reports Ten Attacks Repulsed

Struggle Between Brenta and Piave Has Now Continued Ten Days

LONDON, Dec. 21.—Continuing their powerful counter attacks between the Piave and the Brenta, the Italians have retaken from the enemy a considerable portion of the ground lost on Tuesday in the region of Monte Asolone. Rome announced tonight in spite of a terrific fire from the Austro-German artillery, General Diaz's troops held these positions throughout yesterday, thus lessening the imminent danger to which their lines had been exposed by the enemy's recent advances.

The Berlin War Office report to-day lays stress on the ferocity of the Italian counter efforts east of the Brenta, but asserts that nowhere were they able to gain ground. Seven times the Italian troops dashed forward against the heights west of Monte Asolone and three times they assailed the powerful Monte Pertica position, according to this report. All these assaults, Berlin claims, as well as an attack on Monte Solarolo, to the north, broke down with heavy losses to the enemy.

**Battle Day After Day**  
The struggle between the Piave and the Brenta, which has developed into one of the most bitter combats of the war, has now continued with hardly a lull for ten days. The first eight days of the battle saw the invaders conquer in turn the mountain strongholds of Beretta, Solarolo, Campitello, Pertica and Asolone, and press steadily forward to within four miles of the Venetian plain, easy access to which is provided by the San Lorenzo Valley, now entirely under the enemy's fire.

In these first eight days the Austrians captured, according to their own claims, 5,200 prisoners. The ninth day of the conflict, Wednesday, witnessed the first serious efforts of the Italians to assume the aggressive, and yesterday they succeeded in setting the enemy on the defensive, and for the first time wrested back some of their lost ground.

**Italians' Power Greater**  
It is too early to say that the initiative in the great battle has passed to the Italians, but at least their spirited and successful reactions in the last two days give evidence of increasing power and morale, and may possibly be the prelude to a general movement which will rob the enemy of his hard-won successes.

In the battle the British and French infantry have taken little part, but constantly the Italians have had to rely on their artillery for defensive support, so that their contribution has not been insignificant by any means. The only attack in which British troops took part last week proved a failure, but as the struggle goes on both expeditionary forces are expected to join in the fight more actively. Meanwhile, the Austrian and German losses are mounting rapidly and have not yet been repaid with any decisive victories.

**U.S. Urged to Give Italy Wheat and Corn at Once**

Rome, Dec. 20.—"One of the very greatest services that could be rendered to Italy now would be the sending over of large quantities of wheat and also cornmeal," said Ernest P. Bicknell, director general of civilian relief of the Red Cross, who has just completed an extensive investigation of Italy's refugee problem.

"Italy's wheat shortage is known in the United States, but it is not known here that the population, both soldiers and civilians, depends almost as much on the principal food. I visited every section of Italy and everywhere was told that the first need was bread, with war munitions second. Also, it must be understood that wheat and not white flour is required, since the Italians are accustomed to baking whole-wheat bread except in certain parts of the north, where cornmeal is used."

"The refugees' problem will remain acute this winter. It now is a question of helping to obtain work to make them self-supporting and to see that the family life is not destroyed. Venice offers the first example to all Europe of a scientific handling of refugees by removing families slowly, but entirely, and taking along their working tools. Thus, the famous Venetian lace manufacture now is being carried on at Rimini as it was in Venice, and the same condition applies to the tobacco and the leather factories."

"It was due partly to the efforts of American Consul Carroll at Venice that the refugee movement became complete to the new homes. The Red Cross also contributed to this result by establishing a hospital at Rimini."

**Teuton Forces in Italy Nearly Tripled by Troops From Russian Front**

WITH THE FRENCH ARMIES IN NORTHERN ITALY, Thursday, Dec. 20.—A careful compilation of the

## Pershing Restricts Men To Beer and Light Wine

Severe Punishment for Drunkenness Provided in New Orders—Morality of American Troops Wins Praise of the French

(By The Associated Press)  
WITH THE AMERICAN ARMY IN FRANCE, Thursday, Dec. 20 (delayed).—There is no scarcity of volunteers for the dangerous work of airplane observers among the younger officers of the army. When a call was issued at the heavy artillery training grounds three times the number asked for responded. Some of these were sent to train with American pilots and others with French. The latter are doing the observation work for the heavy artillery, which the Americans, who had been working with guns from approximately 150 to 400 millimetres calibre, are now ready to fire.

The American artillery to-day watched the French handling the gigantic 400-millimetre gun, which hurls a projectile weighing more than a ton at such a great range that it was necessary to haul the weapon several miles outside the training grounds, which are probably the largest in the world, so that the shells would fall on open ground at the targets. The firing continued all day, the terrible explosions shaking the houses in the territory and being heard at a distance of many miles.

After a certain period the American gunners will begin firing with the 400-millimetre pieces, so that by the time they get into action they will be as familiar with the gun as their comrades now are with the 75s. During the firing a big shell burst prematurely near an observation post filled with young American officers. Splinters and fragments rained down, but no one was injured.

Among the heavy guns with which the Americans have begun working are big howitzers of a certain calibre which are declared to be among the most powerful weapons the war has produced.

strength and disposition of the tremendous Austro-German forces, which, originally concentrated for the Italian offensive, and probably have been augmented by troops from the Russian front, has just been completed by the French military authorities.

The summary shows that between the middle of November and the middle of December the bulk of the enemy forces has been steadily shifted from the Lower Piave line to the sector between Vidor, on the Upper Piave, and the Asiago Plateau—the part that is held by the French—until the forces which now are trying to batter their way into the Northern Italian plains have been nearly tripled, and this army is all the stronger because of the fact that it includes fully seven German divisions known to be engaged against the Allies.

This formidable strength of the invaders accounts for the scattered gains that have been recorded during the last fortnight, culminating in the capture on Tuesday of Monte Asolone. These positions were only a few miles from the plain proper and therefore, as in the case of Col della Beretta, captured a few days previously, their acquisition is valuable.

In gradually relinquishing a few points and in falling back on this sector upon a new line, the Italians are again strongly and strategically located.

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Fighting machine, named after sunken liner and called "Avenger," was photographed as it was making its way through a ruined French village to attack Germans in the offensive at Cambrai.

## Allied Soldiers Sure of Victory, Says Gen. Scott

He Finds Spirit of Confidence and Enthusiasm Along Fighting Line

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21.—Direct assurances of the confidence of both British and French commanders in General Pershing's ability and their satisfaction with the breadth and soundness of his preparations to make American arms effective on the western front have reached Washington from the return from Europe of Major General Hugh L. Scott, former chief of staff, who was in conference to-day with Secretary Baker and other War Department officials.

The men who are actually leading the Allied armies, from the commanders-in-chief and members of the war ministries down to the corps and division commanders, have been unhesitating in expressing their approval of the chief of the American expeditionary force and his methods.

General Scott visited virtually every part of the battle front and went carefully through all the training processes of both the French and British armies. He believes General Pershing has laid the foundations for American army training upon what is best in French and British methods and experience. There is no doubt in his mind that American troops will be the equal of any on the front when they come to grips with the German army. They are taking their training enthusiastically.

There is no pessimism as to the outcome of the war in the fighting lines, General Scott found. The armies of the Allies are cool and confident. The confidence of victory among the fighting men, he found, became greater the closer the observer got to the front. There were no doubts in the trenches. Such pessimism as there may be among the British appears to be confined to the uninformed in London. It is not reflected in the army.

General Scott now personally has inspected three fighting fronts, the Russian, French and British. It appears probable that he is to command a division of the American army, although no direct statement of the place designed for him by Secretary Baker has been made.



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## Combats in Air Mark Struggle On West Front

British Aviators Have Brought Down 24 Hostile Craft Since Monday

Germans Try Defence Soldiers Fill Cables With Messages Home

Strike at Varied Points Along Defenders' Line to Test Their Strength

LONDON, Dec. 21.—The battle of the airman continues with violence over most of the Western front, but there have been few infantry operations of any importance. Field Marshal Haig reports to-day the destruction of five more hostile aeroplanes, bringing the total since Monday night to twenty-four—a record which has seldom been surpassed in the war, except on the occasion of a concerted air drive by both sides preliminary to a great battle. In the last four days the British themselves have lost but five machines.

In their continued raids in the West the Germans yesterday struck in the region of St. Quentin and northeast of Messines, in Flanders. The artillery duels attained great intensity on the Ypres, Verdun and Wever fronts, the London and Paris war offices report.

One significant feature of the isolated infantry operations on the Western front during the last two weeks of comparative quiet lies in the fact that the Germans have thrust forward at virtually every point on the battle-front, from the North Sea to the Swiss border. The lightning rarely has struck in the same place over this period. The reason obviously is that they have been methodically testing

every point of the British and French defences to expose any vulnerable spots. They have been "nibbling," as the opposing forces have done many times before a great stroke, for a place at which to aim their coming blow. As the most persistent and the strongest of these raiding operations have been centered in the region between Rheims and Verdun, many observers believe Hindenburg will strike there. That his attack will be concentrated against the French is the prevailing opinion in military circles. But doubt of Pétain's ability to parry the onslaught finds little expression. England looks to France with confidence in the final outcome and will aid with all necessary forces.

**Men in France Plan Christmas Entertainment for the Children There**

WITH THE AMERICAN ARMY IN FRANCE, Dec. 21.—The rush of Christmas cable messages from the American soldiers to their homes began to-day. Company commanders sent to the telegraph offices thousands of messages for the soldiers' mothers, wives, sisters, sweethearts, relatives and friends.

The first of the Christmas concerts and entertainments for the children, especially the little refugees, will be held Saturday in a theatre in a town where the correspondents have their headquarters. The entertainment has been arranged by the American officers and the sub-prefect of the town, and a noted singer will be brought from Paris through the efforts of the French staff.

There will be a Christmas tree, presided over by a Pere Noel, or Santa Claus, who on other days is an American officer. Many American soldiers contributed to the fund for the purchase of the gifts, one machine gun battalion alone having raised 3,000 francs.

## Official Statements

West BRITISH

LONDON, Dec. 21.—This morning a raid was attempted by the enemy northeast of Messines. It was repulsed by our rifle and machine gun fire. We captured a few prisoners during the day. The night encounters on different parts of the front.

Apart from hostile artillery activity east of Ypres, there is nothing further of special interest to report.

AVIATION.—Three hostile machines were shot down in air fighting Wednesday, and two others were driven down out of control. One of our machines is missing.

FRENCH

PARIS, Dec. 21 (DAY).—An important raid undertaken by the enemy east of Faget, in the region of St. Quentin, was repulsed completely.

The artillery was active on the right bank of the Meuse, in the region northeast of Fleury, at Hartmannswillerkopf and in the sector east of Thionville. The night passed in quiet on the remainder of the front.

GERMAN

BERLIN, Dec. 21.—Army of Crown Prince Rupprecht.—In Flanders there was very little artillery activity, owing to a thick mist. North of the Ypres-Messines road there was a considerable increase in the firing during the afternoon. A number of English prisoners were taken in a successful reconnoitring engagement south of Holbeke.

Army of Grand Duke Albrecht.—Near Lathum, south of Altkirch, thirty-one prisoners fell into our hands as the result of a successful attack on the French lines.

ITALIAN FRONT

ROME, Dec. 21.—Yesterday, in the region of the Monte Asolone front, east of the Brenta, our troops, advancing energetically, although opposed with stubbornness by the enemy, succeeded in depriving the enemy of a considerable portion of the gains which he had made in the morning.

A strong attempt at a counter attack delivered at Monte Pertica, was immediately dispersed. On the Piave the activity of our reconnoitring troops brought us prisoners.

In the Canova Valley, east of the Action, and on the Monte Tono and Montebello front the harassing fire by both armies was more lively and more frequent.

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